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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, source of our strength, we come before You today remembering that Your presence and power sustain us during life's rigorous demands. Lord, it is comforting to know that in every situation You are always present to empower us with Your love.

Today, use our lawmakers as instruments of Your peace and love. Examine their hearts and minds, providing them with the courage to walk continually in Your truth. Look favorably upon their efforts to build a better nation and world, guiding them with Your wisdom.

Lord, lead our Nation also. May our efforts at home and abroad reflect Your character and grace.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 17, 2009.
To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable ROLAND W. BURRIS, a Senator from the State of Illinois, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. BURRIS thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, pending the arrival of the majority leader, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I apologize to my counterpart, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, for not being here, but I was occupied outside the Chamber.

Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period for morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans will control the final 30 minutes.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3082, the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs appropriations bill. Several amendments are still in order to the bill. We expect a vote for up to three of those amendments prior to lunch. Following the recess, we will have a number of votes we have to

take. It is important that we do that. The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 for the weekly party caucuses, but following the recess the Senate will proceed to vote in relation to the Inhofe amendment, No. 2774, to be followed by a vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

Upon disposition of H.R. 3082, there will be 1 hour of debate prior to a cloture vote on the nomination of David Hamilton to be U.S. circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, we know the House-passed health care bill will cut Medicare, raise taxes, and raise premiums. We also know the bill being developed by the majority leader will do the same. This morning, I want to focus on the \$½ trillion cuts in Medicare—\$½ trillion over 10 years.

We have here the House-passed health care bill in its entirety. This is a 2,000-page, as the Wall Street Journal called it, "monstrosity." In the area of the Medicare cuts, what does that mean? When you say you are going to cut Medicare by \$½ trillion over 10 years, what does it mean? It means cuts to hospitals, cuts to Medicare Advantage, cuts to nursing homes, cuts to home health care, and cuts to hospice. Those vital programs would be collectively subjected to \$½ trillion in cuts over 10 years.

Focusing on hospice, this is the section of the bill that deals with hospice. The legalese is a little bit mind-boggling, but to give you a sense of how these things are written, it says, "Subclause (VII) of section"—and it goes on:

... 1814(i)(1)(c)(ii) of the Social Security Act ... is amended by inserting after "the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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